

# The American Teacher

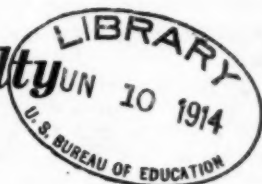
*Democracy in Education; Education for Democracy.*

VOL. III No. 6

NEW YORK, JUNE, 1914

50 CENTS A YEAR

## *Teach Loyalty*



Teach the Children to be Loyal  
To the School and its Aspirations;  
Not merely to the Teachers or to the Principal

Teach the Children to be Loyal  
To the City and to its Weal;  
Not to the Police or to the Party Boss

Teach the Children to be Loyal  
To the Nation and its Humanity;  
Not merely to the Men who hold the Power

Teach the Children to be Loyal  
To the Truth they can understand;  
Not to the Dogmas they can memorize

Teach the Children to be Loyal  
To Principles and to Ideals;  
Not merely to Badges and to Empty Names

Teach the Children to be Loyal.

# SUPERVISION AND THE TEACHING PROFESSION

BENJAMIN C. GRUENBERG

AT A RECENT convention of medical men, a prominent physician is reported to have made these remarks:

A professional man has no commodity to sell; his only assets are his scientific knowledge and his personal ability; and he who claims to possess a greater knowledge or greater skill than his professional associates—whether physicians, preachers or lawyers—is an egotist, or worse, and forfeits the respect of his professional brethren and his fellow-citizens.

Which suggests a number of questions.

In the first place, is the principle enunciated by the doctor a sound principle? And is it just as true for the teaching profession as it is for the others mentioned? And does it make any difference whether the claim to superiority is made by the teacher himself, or is made for him by a supervisory officer?

The truth of the idea must be detached from the question of individual variation. Probably no one knows better than the physician that no two individuals are exactly alike. We differ in scientific knowledge, in ability to use that knowledge, in personal skill and so on. But every member of the calling must possess a certain minimum attainment without which he can have no standing whatever. Above this irreducible minimum the superiority of one worker over his fellow workers must be judged by the public in whose service alone the ability has any meaning; and by his peers, who alone have the standards for judging him on the technical side.

How does this apply to teaching? The professional teacher makes no claim to greater knowledge or ability than his peers. The better he is, the more conscious is he of his own shortcomings, the more remote is his ideal from his achievement. The value of the teachers service is to be judged primarily by his pupils; but that is too slow a process to be of value in the administration of

schools. We have accordingly developed a system of inspection and rating of teachers that has all the outward appearance of a good machine, but all the inner workings for defeating its own ends.

## *Work of Supervisory Teachers*

There are three important functions that are performed by supervisory officers in relation to their official subordinates in a school system. These are inspection, rating and "supervising." The intent of inspection is akin to that of spying in. It is often, to be sure, frank enough; not all inspectors are of the "gum-shoe" variety. But the process is of a kind that tends to make men and women assume the attitude of looking for evil, watching out for infractions of rules, breaches of discipline, defects in method or in scholarship—looking for trouble generally. With the purpose of maintaining standards, the inspector becomes a searcher for defects, naturally enough.

Aside from the effect of this performance upon the inspector, it is well to consider the effect upon the teacher. Instead of cordiality, there is apt to be suspicion. Instead of doing your best without regard to the presence of the inspector, you lose your nerve and do several grades worse than usual. Instead of looking to the inspector's periodical visits as opportunities for getting new suggestions, helpful hints for your work and for your development, you look upon them with cynical indifference at the best, or with paralyzing fear at the worst.

Closely connected with the inspection is the record of the inspection, which in many systems takes the form of a rating. A teacher is rated as of grade A, B or C, with or without +'s. The object of this rating is presumably to furnish a basis for eliminating the undesirable teachers and for advancing the best. The fixing of these grades, however, results in so

much ill-feeling, that it is doubtful whether the harm done does not more than neutralize whatever benefits may lie in the system. All this, too, is beside the question of the adequacy of the inspection as a basis for rating.

For where the rating is made by principals, who are generally in a better position to judge of the qualifications of a teacher than are inspecting superintendents, the rating produces the same undesirable reaction upon the feeling of the teacher. It is generally recognized that there are too many irrelevant factors that influence the rating more or less profoundly. There are first of all the varying standards—one inspector is on the lookout for ventilation and a tidy desk; another is sensitive to inharmonious color combinations in the teacher's dress and the posture of the children; a third is keen on the voice quality and the decorations of the room. Standards that allow of the classification of teachers into three or four grades must of necessity be rigid and arbitrary, permitting no recognition of a dozen qualities that go to make a good teacher, but that do not, can not, enter into such a scheme of rating. Every good teacher has something distinctive about his personality. The A's and B's will not show this; and with many supervisors these very qualities will lead to low ratings. And finally, such ratings do not sufficiently recognize the improvements that a teacher undergoes from time to time.

---

#### *What Supervision May Mean*

In the way of supervision there are several distinct activities. There may be for example, the issuing of orders. You are given a syllabus and told to teach *that*. Or you are given an examination paper and asked to show what your pupils can do with *that*. Or you are reminded that certain reports must be in on such and such dates. Or you are instructed what to do with your class when the fire-drill signal is given.

All these things constitute "supervision." But they are not all. You may be called into a conference and have a

sermon read to you. That is supervision, also. Or you may have a series of directions for the week's or the month's work read to you. Or you may be invited to criticize the plan of work as laid out by a fellow teacher; or to reply to criticisms made of the plan you had submitted. You may be invited to make suggestions for improving the work for the following year—to show how another year's experience has changed your point of view. There are scores of things that you might be invited to do by the principal, in his supervisory capacity. And there are a hundred things that you might be directed to do, by the same principal, still in his supervisory capacity. There is a great deal of this "supervision" that can be just as well done by an executive secretary as by the ordinary principal; and there is a great deal that is never done at all, because the principal remains a mechanical receiver and transmitter of orders and directions.

---

#### *Improving the Teacher*

To make the work of the supervising principal of value in its relation to the teachers, it is necessary that he either undertake to improve the work of each individual teacher, by means of close inspection, followed by personal interviews for the purpose of discussing weak and strong points in the teacher's work, by means of suggestions for study and for *thinking*, by means of encouragement and inspiration. Or it is necessary that he undertake the improvement of the work of all the teachers by means of group conferences in which school and class-room problems are freely and frankly discussed by all, in which the position of the principal is simply that of an older and more experienced—and therefore more expert—fellow-worker, in which there is a spirit of mutual helpfulness and the inspiration that comes from feeling that others are heartily with you in a worthy cause.

One of the distressing and discouraging features in our calling lies in this, that the workers who more than any others represent society's conscious pur-

pose are still possessed with the sentiments and outlook of extreme individualism. This shows itself in the wide prevalence of mutual distrust between different ranks of the teaching profession. Whatever may be the reasons for this lack of cordiality—and they are easily traced—we should make a vigorous effort to eliminate it from our school atmosphere. And one of the best ways for doing this is to remove the causes. These seem to lie in our systems of rating, inspection and supervision.

### *The Personal Equation*

The President's Commission on Efficiency showed that the rating of Government employes was so defective that clerks, for example, who were rated low in one bureau would be rated high by a different chief, and vice versa. The element of "personality" plays so decided a role in this matter, that both for the good of the service and for the interests of the individual worker, transfers should be made with a view to bringing each worker under a chief with whom he or she can work harmoniously. The defects in ratings are just as serious in the teaching business as they are in the clerical work of government bureaus, and the need for readjustment is recognized by all who have given the matter any thought.

These defects are emphasized where the promotion of the teacher, or his salary, depends upon the ratings. This has been the case in many school systems; but there is a reaction against the plan, originally installed in the interests of "efficiency." It has been found to defeat its own purpose, for instead of automatically separating the teachers of "superior merit" and assigning them the higher salaries, and instead of discovering the poorer teachers and eliminating them, the plan has served to concentrate the attention of teachers on the best way of getting an increase in salary, it has aroused resentment and bitterness on the part of those who failed to get the approval of the superior officers, and has shifted the

standard from that of doing the best work within one's powers, to doing that which is most likely to be approved.

### *Economic Considerations*

Another difficulty that might have been anticipated by a little closer attention to the psychology of our economic relations is the embarrassment imposed upon the principals who were called upon to make ratings that were not merely invidious, but also involved economic consequences for the teachers concerned. These points are brot out in a statement made by Associate Superintendent Clarence E. Meleney, of New York, from which the following is quoted:

Since the higher schedules have been in force (1 January 1912) and approval has been required for every period of three years, there have been more contentions by teachers for salary increase and more appeals from the ratings of principals and district superintendents than ever before. It is my opinion, tho I have no statistics to confirm it, that teachers have been rated more leniently than formerly, because their records have had a greater effect upon approval. Principals do not wish to cause their teachers loss of salary. If this should prove on investigation to be true, it would indicate that the higher salaries have not contributed to greater efficiency, and also that principals have been less free to exercise an unbiased judgment of the teacher's work, and to make a critical examination and accurate approval of results.

The thot and energy of the teachers should be directed to efficient instructing and training of the pupils and not to rating and salary. They should be freed from anxiety as to themselves and be absorbed in the progress and growth of the children. The principals should not be embarrassed by the material consequences to the teachers of their ratings, but should exercise their judgment in estimating and measuring the efficiency of classroom work. When salary is the thot uppermost in the minds of teachers and principals, no accurate valuation of instruction can be made; and efficient,

conscientious, and progressive work is almost impossible.

### *Remedies Suggested*

Several sets of suggestions have been made for remedying a situation that all admit to be serious. But none of the suggestions so far noted go to the root of the matter.

Superintendent Meleney would save the heart of the principal by placing upon the superintendents the disagreeable task of declaring a teacher not sufficiently meritorious to deserve the highest salaries. The temptation to use this power as a club would by this plan also be taken from the principal—and imposed upon the superintendents. The teachers will still be left in the position of seeking approval of superiors.

As Miss F. I. Davenport, of the N. Y. Training School for Teachers, says:

The final effect of twelve or fifteen years of effort to secure approval must mean death to the best powers of the really, and of the potentially, efficient teacher. It is only the morally weak person, the one so hopelessly lacking in social and individual ideals as not to be susceptible to normal incentives, who can do actually more efficient work under such conditions.

When their maximum salary is finally reached, such persons revert to type, and the system suffers accordingly. In the mean time the highly efficient and potentially efficient teachers are having their best energies misdirected and their professional development arrested by the moral pressure to secure good marks, and make a favorable impression with those upon whom their financial and professional welfare depends. No person can entirely withstand the demoralizing influence of such an incentive for twelve or fifteen years. Of the so-called average teachers it will make retainers, and of the exceptionally endowed it will breed politicians and diplomats, but it cannot develop consecrated, highly efficient and independent teachers and educators.

The Association of Women Principals

adopted resolutions approving a system of rating teachers described below:

1. The teachers shall be rated as *satisfactory* and *unsatisfactory*. When the rating, *unsatisfactory*, is given, explicit statement of reasons shall be given. In addition to the mark, *satisfactory*, mention may be made of the teachers who have done exceptionally good work, under the heading, "distinguished for," explicit statement of the point in which the distinction consists being required.

2. Ratings shall be given annually only.

3. A principal newly appointed or newly transferred to a school shall not be required to give either annual or semi-annual ratings to teachers until he or she shall have been a year in the new school. If in the mean time special conditions arise regarding any individual teacher, requiring the giving of a rating before the expiration of the first year, the principal shall give immediate and careful attention to this individual teacher's work.

The Teachers' Advisory Council adopted a set of recommendations submitted by its committee on teachers' interests. The recommendations are as follows:

- "1. Service of the teacher should result in annual increases in salary, which should be continuous until the maximum of that schedule under which the teacher is paid is reached, unless the service of the teacher is declared to be unsatisfactory.

- "2. Ratings should be given by those who are most closely associated with the work of the teacher.

- "3. For every unsatisfactory rating material reasons should be given.

- "4. In cases of appeals the final committee should be composed of persons whose official positions are separate and distinct from the positions of those persons who have perviously rated the teacher.

- "5. Ratings for salary increases should not be confused with ratings given for promotions."

### *Fundamental Assumptions*

In all of these plans two assumptions stand out as fundamental; but these assumptions may well be challenged.



The first one is that a teacher is either "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory." In view of what may be observed any day as to the manner in which men and women form judgments about each other, this assumption is seen to be a traditional thot-form that has no validity whatever as a basis for the practical administration of an important public function. The subjective element plays so large a part in our judgments, and our judgments are always so closely related to special circumstances, that the rating of a teacher as satisfactory or unsatisfactory is hardly any more useful than the rating into three or four grades.

This form of rating has the advantage that it leaves no doubt as to where a teacher is placed—in or out. But it leaves out of account the fact that a teacher may be considered "unsatisfactory" by one or by several superiors, and yet be a valuable member of a teaching corps. The plan recommended by the Women Principal's Association brings out the importance of recognizing special ability or service, such as personal influence, care of assemblies, service with clubs, etc., social and philanthropic service among the children in their homes, and so on. It also recognizes the need for specifying causes for adverse ratings, as do other plans.

The second fundamental assumption is that the work of a teacher can best be judged by the "superior officer." This is certainly a relic of the time when the superiors made all the rules for governing everything. In the recommendations of the Teachers' Council, it is explicitly stated that ratings should be given by those "who are most closely associated with the work of the teacher," and of course that is taken to mean the principal. I wonder how long the public would endure it to have the relative merits of physicians and lawyers and ministers determined for them by inspectors and supervisors of the respective groups of workers. We should probably be inclined to assume the right to judge physicians, say, by the satisfaction they yielded to the sick people and to their relatives, rather than by the esteem in which they

were held by the professors of the medical college. At the same time, the esteem in which physicians hold each other is a fair index of their relative merits. On the one hand there is needed a check against the imposition of purely academic standards by the members of the profession; on the other hand there is needed the protection of the public against the plausible quack.

---

### *Evaluating Teachers*

Are not these principles equally true of the teaching profession? Is it not the public that is served—in this case the children—and the manner of service as adjudged by one's peers that are the most important factors in determining the worker's relative merit?

We have no means of discovering promptly enough the effect of a teacher's service upon the pupils. The inspection and supervision of superiors do not, in most cases, either develop the teacher's powers or discover the teacher's true merits—or defects, unless these be glaring. What is needed is a system of rating and supervision that will give us the benefits of supervision and inspection, with none of the depressing and demoralizing by-products.

Such a system will have to be worked out by a radical application of scientific principles of management, under democratic ideals. This does not mean that every person is to be taken at his own valuation; nor does it mean that everybody will somehow get along without supervision, minding his own business.

Generally speaking, the principal of a school has had more experience than the other teachers, and has more mature judgment. He is not necessarily more able technically, he has not necessarily more intelligence than most of the other teachers, nor higher sincerity of purpose. Unless he is an exceptional person, however, he does not habitually make the younger teacher feel perfectly at ease, he does not uniformly inspire the confidence of the teacher in his friendliness and sense of justice, he does not always dis-

arm suspicion as to his fairness and frankness. On the other hand, with the best intention the ordinary principal is embarrassed by the traditional relationship between workers and the chief, he must overcome the traditional suspicions and timidity of the teacher, he must eliminate the idea that he something to hide. This strained and wasteful relation between the teacher and the supervisor can be removed only by placing both in the position of fellow workers. By taking from the principal the responsibility and the power to rate the teacher, the basis for their mutual intercourse is at once changed.

### *The Principal's Place*

Two questions then suggest themselves: What will there be for the principal to do? and How will the standing of teachers be determined?

The latter question may be attacked first. In all schools except those of one or a very few rooms the teaching body can inspect itself and rate itself. Teachers can visit one another's classes, confer on the visits, suggest improvements and agree on ratings. A teacher who is adversely criticized by a "superior" is challenged to defend herself, to justify her practise, and to resent the adverse judgment. We are all more likely to be frank in criticizing our equals, and more amenable to criticism from our equals. A criticism that comes from a fellow teacher who has not the responsibility or the authority to advance or to reduce my standing is more likely to be accepted in good faith; it is more likely to lead to a sincere attempt at self-improvement, and it is less likely to arouse ill-feeling or jealousies. Moreover, whatever improvement may come from this will be directed toward approaching certain objective and professional standards, and not toward gaining the approval of a particular person.

### *Professional Advancement*

To this plan the objection may be interposed that it is like trying to lift ourselves by our boot-straps; that the group

that proceeds by its own standards has in reality no standards. This objection, however, is sound only in a formal sense. In the first place, if every teacher in the school could improve her skill in questioning so that it was equal to that of the best questioner; if every teacher could closely approach the best in the school in the matter of earnest enthusiasm; if every teacher could improve her methods of presentation, etc., to match those of the best teacher, there would be a tremendous gain. In the second place, a body of teachers entrusted with the responsibility of maintaining their own standards may not be presumed to become static. There must necessarily be study on the part of the individual; and whatever is gained by study is at once placed in the common fund of the school's resources. Besides—and that answers the second question raised above—it should be the principal's chief business, as professional supervisor, to stimulate and inspire the group of teachers to seek higher standards and to seek more diligently to reach in practise their best knowledge.

A group of teachers entrusted with the responsibility of improving themselves by coöperating with each other, will not long tolerate in their midst a drone or a reprobate or a moral delinquent. They will be quicker to discover the unfit teacher; and by the same methods they will be quick to discover special superiority.

### *New Means for New Needs*

A democratic organization of the school should bring to the front whatever usable talents now lie hidden in the modest and the timid and the gentle teachers. It should reduce to their proper places the blustering and the aggressive, the evaders and the intriguers. It should make impossible the management of a school by a "kitchen cabinet." And it should free the principal for the necessary constructive work of readjusting an institution inherited from the middle ages to the actual conditions in modern society.

The new wine calls for new bottles.

# A NEW TYPE of CITY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

FLORENCE ROOD

Secretary Grade Teachers' Federation, St. Paul

ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA, adopted in 1912, a commission charter plan of city government to become fully effective June 1, 1914, which contains at least one unusual feature.

Other cities operating under similar charters have retained their Boards of Education whereas St. Paul elected to put its schools into the hands of one man designated as Commissioner of Education, a situation which creates possibilities of interesting development.

The chapter governing the schools includes another interesting feature, in the form of a Board of Teachers. The section reads as follows:

**BOARD OF TEACHERS.**—Sec. 399. It shall be the duty of the council to provide, by ordinance for the election of a board of teachers of the public schools to consist of not more than twelve, nor less than eight members, elected by secret ballot by the teachers and principals of the public schools. This board of teachers shall be called together by the superintendent of schools from time to time, not less than once a month, to advise with said superintendent and said commissioner upon problems relating to the designation of proper text books, the adoption of course of study and the methods of teaching in the schools of St. Paul. Said meetings shall be public and records thereof kept as public records. Said board of teachers shall have power to pass resolutions and make recommendations upon subjects designated in this paragraph, but it is hereby declared that the adoption of such recommendations shall lie in the discretion of the superintendent of schools and the commissioner of education subject to the action of the council.

There is no overestimation of the value of the Board on the part of the teachers. They recognize its character and its relation to school officials. There appears to be nothing on the charter however, that precludes the right of the Board to carry its recommendations to the Council, since with that body lies the final decision, if the Superintendent and Commissioner refuse them fair consideration.

The charter has established the Board; the success of the plan is in the hands of the teachers. The standing of the Board in the community rests

largely upon the intelligence shown in the choice of the first members. Teachers of initiative, constructive ability, known professional standards, tact, and discretion will be able to outline a course, and establish a policy which should make the Board a factor in the administration of school affairs, and it has been intimated, lead to an extension of its powers, and make its findings mandatory.

The teachers were invited to indicate the form on which they desired the ordinance drawn, and a committee of nine, with a representation of three from each of the departmental clubs: the Grade Teachers' Federation, the High School Teachers' Club, and the Principals' Club, agreed upon the following points:

1. All teachers of the city shall be classified as follows:

Teachers in grade work.

Teachers in high school work.

Principals and supervisors.

2. The Advisory Board of Teachers shall be elected from the whole body of teachers, as defined above, but no one class shall have a representation of a majority of the whole.

3. Nominations shall be made by petition.

4. The election shall be by ballot at a central voting place.

5. There shall be an election committee of six, two to be selected by each of the three classes of teachers that are to be represented on the Advisory Board, and these six persons shall have charge of all matters pertaining to the

6. The election committee shall canvass the vote and deposit the sealed ballots and statement of the result with the Commissioner of Education, and file a similar statement with the city clerk.

7. Vacancies shall be filled by the candidates having the next highest number of votes in the class where said vacancies occur.



# American Teacher

*Democracy in Education; Education for Democracy*

Published monthly, except July and August, by  
THE AMERICAN TEACHER COMPANY, INC.,  
129 Lafayette Street, New York.

ANGELO PATRI.....President  
BENJAMIN GLASSBERG.....Secretary  
LOUISE M. DITHRIDGE.....Treasurer

HENRY R. LINVILLE . . . Editor-in-Chief  
BENJAMIN C. GRUENBERG, Managing Editor

GABRIEL R. MASON  
J. EDWARD MAYMAN  
MARK HOFFMAN } ....Associate Editors

This Magazine will be sent to subscribers until an order to discontinue, together with all arrangements, is received. At the time of expiration, a bill will be found in the copy.

REMITTANCES should be made in postal money-order, express order, draft, stamps or check (New York exchange).

Subscription price, 50 cents for the year.  
(Foreign, 60 cents)

Copyright, 1914, THE AMERICAN TEACHER CO., INC.



Entered at the Post Office of New York  
as second-class matter.

VOL. III JUNE, 1914 No. 6

*This paper seeks to advance the status of the teacher to the dignity and the influence of a profession, by advocating high standards of admission to the calling; by urging an extension of the opportunities for the participation of teachers in the direction of educational affairs; and by supporting the organization of teachers for all legitimate professional purposes.*

## THE POINT PUSHED A LITTLE FURTHER

IN THE MAY number of THE AMERICAN TEACHER there appeared a signed article on the character of the administration of the high and training schools of New York City. The writer of the article, a member of the editorial staff of this periodical, has received a considerable number of messages of approval

from teachers in those schools, and no messages of doubt or disapproval, altho some of the latter sort must have been expressed by readers.

There is no mistaking the conviction of thinking teachers throught the New York educational system that the administration of the schools is largely in the hands of persons who are selected because of their real or implied fealty to individuals in charge of the system, rather than because of their originality, their constructive ability, their social understanding, or their fealty to the large purposes of education themselves. At the same time, the writer of the article has found upon the numerous occasions when he has called public attention to the shortcomings of local or general educational practise, and suggested constructive reforms, that the majority of teachers who really and sincerely want to see the regeneration of education effected, are primarily concerned, and not a little worried, about what may happen to their friends or to themselves while engaged in promoting the cause of educational reform.

If the failure of high educational administrators to apply sound principles of efficiency is responsible for the appointment of many unfit high school principals, then the timidity of teachers may be charged with at least a share in the responsibility for the continuance of a vicious system of selection. If high school teachers who can easily think better ideals than those that are now being applied do not stand by their colors, they will continue to be the laughing stock of the "practical" men who know how to get the \$5,000 jobs—and get them. And what is more to the point, there will exist no immediately practical reason why the current system of selection on personal grounds should fall.

## COOPERATING WITH THE PUBLIC

ONE OF THE most encouraging facts in current educational development is the readiness with which educators enter into coöperation with individuals and associa-

tions, in the furtherance of the common purpose of the schools. This coöperation is well shown in Miss Denison's book, *Helping School Children* (reviewed in *THE AMERICAN TEACHER*, February, 1913). A phase of this coöperation that is developing very rapidly is that of continuation classes in shops, stores or factories.

In New York City this form of educational extension has been especially prominent during the past year. One department store after another has established classes for its younger workers, in coöperation with the Department of Education, under the provision of the Compulsory Education Law. The chief criticism of these undertakings has so far come from the organized retail store clerks. A union of these workers sent to the Board of Education a protest against the establishment of these classes on the ground that thru them the Board of Education gives its quasi sanction to the conditions of employment that obtain in the department stores, and that thru the classes the young workers would only become confirmed in a complacent indifference to these objectionable conditions.

It seems strange that the public schools, which are ostensibly the agents of society as a whole, not of any special class, should be used in a way that can arouse in any one's mind the suspicion that they are being used to further the interests or to injure the interests of a special portion of the population. Undoubtedly some portions of the population are more inclined to be suspicious than are others; and undoubtedly there are many suspicions abroad that are quite unwarranted. At the same time, it is a recognized principal in public administration that where an activity directly affects the interests of distinct groups of people, these should have an opportunity to be heard before policies are decided upon. It is for this reason that public hearings are constantly being held by legislative and executive bodies, on all sorts of subjects. And it is therefore not unreasonable that in the organization of industrial education the views and interests of the workers should receive the same consideration as is ac-

corded to the demands and interests of the employers. However public spirited the officials may be, and however much the employers may love their workers, these two classes cannot be entrusted with the responsibility and the authority for looking after the interests of *all* classes.

## STANDARDS FOR SUPERINTENDENTS

THE COMMITTEE ON Nominations of the Board of Education of New York City recently sent to candidates for a vacant seat in the Board of Superintendents a list of questions, which is designed to give a basis for wise and satisfactory selection.

There are seven of these questions. Number 1 is designed to bring out the education of the candidate, number 2, his experience in teaching, and number 3, his experience in administration. These questions could of course be answered correctly and fully without yielding much valuable information. But questions 4, 5, and 7 are really important, and in some respects new. We gladly give space to them, with comments.

4. (a) State what contributions you have made, whether by direction, recommendation, actual application or otherwise, concerning the following problems:

(Note—Your answers should include all specific related data, and should be accompanied by any evidence to which you can refer, showing the value of such contributions.)

1. Care and instruction of special types of children. 2. Congestion of school population and methods of dealing therewith. 3. Elementary school course of study and its adjustment to pupils. 4. The high school course of study and its adjustment to pupils. 5. The health of pupils. 6. Methods of citizen co-operation (social centres, neighborhood associations, etc.). 7. Standardization (of any phase of administration, supervision, inspection, or instruction). 8. Truancy. 9. Vocational guidance and placement. 10. Vocational education.

(b) State what contributions, if any, you have made, other than those included under (a), which have tended materially toward the improvement of any parts of school administration, supervision, inspection, or instruction.

(Note—Your answers should contain specific related data, and should be accompan-

ied by any evidence you can submit, showing the value of such contributions.)

(c) What, in your opinion are the five most important educational problems today? Give any suggestions other than those you may have enumerated under (a) or (b) which you believe would help in their solution.

(Note—Suggestions given should be definite and concrete, and should be susceptible of application in a large city like New York.)

Perhaps for the first time in the history of the Department of Education of New York we have in the sections of Question 4 the evidence of an effort to get at the ideas of school management of candidates for high educational office. As an effort it is entirely satisfactory, but a candidate might answer this question with satisfaction to himself and to those who may have the duty of judging the answers, and that without giving proof of superior ability or of fine comprehension of any particular school problem. The test of the usefulness of the question, and of the quality of return for the labor involved in its preparation, lies in the faithfulness with which its implied guarantee to the public is carried out.

In Question 4, and in other questions, there is an absence of that concerning the need of superintendents whose minds are capable of handling complicated and entirely new situations, with ability to analyze them, to formulate problems out of them, and to set agencies to work for the effective solution of the problems. The teachers are tired, and the public should be tired, of superintendents who perfunctorily meet static requirements. A dynamic age demands dynamic men.

5. What is your conception of the function of a member of the board of superintendents and of the work upon which such member, individually and as a member of the board, ought to be engaged? Please make your statement definite and specific.

This question ought to bring out some valuable notions of the function of any educational official. There is always the danger that ideals may not seem so valuable to those who decide on the value as they may really be. At the same time there is an even chance that several candidates may agree on a particular con-

ception. This would always be impressive. Once a valuable conception is accepted, the way is open for its inauguration into actual practise.

6. (a) Outline some of the strong features of your work and any other features which you believe have distinguished it.

(b) Give any other information concerning your work which you believe ought to be considered by the committee in making a decision as to the person best fitted to fill the position of an associate city superintendent of schools in New York City.

This question is covered by number 4, and would have been omitted in more careful editing.

7. Please submit the following information, giving your answers on this sheet: (a) Name. (b) Address. (c) Present position and salary. (d) Date of birth. (e) Have you ever had any controversy with the school authorities? If so, state the particulars of such controversy. (f) Have you ever failed of reappointment? (g) Have you ever been requested to resign. (h) Have you ever been dismissed from any educational position. (i) Submit the names and addresses of five references and letters from not more than three persons who have been in a position to have professional knowledge of the work upon which you have been engaged.

The sections e, f, g, and h, of this question, while proper enough in themselves, are almost sure if answered in certain ways to work injustice to the candidates. The attitude of the New York City educational system toward those who have had "trouble" with it, or with its agents, is harsh and unyielding. Local candidates all know this, and have known it for many years.

There would be no practical use of a candidate presenting himself for this office with a record involving some contention, unless he had powerful political support. Even then his supporters would be at a serious disadvantage. Outside candidates also would have difficulty in convincing the Committee on Nominations of the importance of their attainments, in case they have not on all occasions given proof of possessing "tactfulness." Moreover, there is no question that the clear implication of these sections of the question is that the Department of Education disapproves of controversies, and that a person who has failed of reap-

pointment, or has been requested to resign, is thereby disqualified for consideration in connection with the coming appointment of an associate superintendent.

If this is the attitude of the Committee on Nominations, there will be further reason for waiting for developments before we approve the questionnaire as an effort toward increasing the efficiency of educational officers.

The attention of the Committee is directed to the study of social changes, and to the frequent upheavals in political and economic life, that are incident to the very growth of civilization. Does the Committee imagine that the schools will ever be able to interpret human life as it must be interpreted to children, while officered by spineless impersonations of men who never take issue with any man having authority over them?

### NOT A PROFESSION—III COMMERCIAL TEACHERS

IN EVERY CITY it is possible to find "contractors and builders" who will undertake to erect buildings according to "standard" plans or according to the whims or tastes of the person willing to hire them. These men are not professional architects, altho they claim to do the work of architects. They have no standards and no ideals; their sole ambition is to increase so far as possible the ratio of their incomes to their expenditures. The work in which they are engaged is no doubt legitimate enough, but it is not professional work.

In every city there are many graduates of law-schools, men admitted to the bar, who are nevertheless not professional lawyers, altho they claim to do the work of lawyers. These men not only "fish in troubled waters"—they are not even averse to stirring up the waters. They "fix up" cases and hire "detectives" to help manufacture evidence; they counsel litigation for the sake of the fees, or they counsel compromise when that promises a larger fee. Their interests are not identified with the securing of justice, altho they are not opposed to justice; they are not even con-

cerned with protecting the rights and interests of their clients. They have no standards and no ideals. Their sole ambition is to get a fee—honestly, if easily, but in any event, a fee. One may suppose that the work of these shysters is legitimate, since they find people to employ them: and according to widely prevalent notions, one must do what he is hired to do. Moreover, many of them "make" a great deal of money, and seldom are indicted for violation of the statutes; so that, according to many eminent economists, their services have social value in proportion to their incomes. Yet you and I know that these men are not professional lawyers; they are shysters.

There are many men—and women, too—in this country, who make a living selling "medical" services to all who will pay. These doctors have, in many cases, certificates of graduation from reputable colleges, and even certificates of admission to practise under the law. They will perform forbidden operations, and they will prescribe and sell forbidden drugs—for a fee. These doctors have no standards and no ideals. Their sole ambition is to make money, and many of them make a great deal of it. Like shyster lawyers and commercial near-architects, they supply a certain demand and ask no questions. They have no professional spirit: they are not in business for their health, nor for the health of anyone else. To those who have no standards, they are just doctors; to those who have, they are quacks.

There are many men and women in this country—half a million of them, all together—engaged in the business of teaching. Many of these are seriously interested in guiding growing humanity into a better life. But many are teachers just because that's the easiest thing to be without being found out. They comply with the regulations and "present" the course of study according to the syllabus, and ask no questions. They do what they are told, as well as may be; and, in return they collect the stipend agreed upon. It must be admitted that most of them do not become teachers thru inordinate cupidity. On the con-

trary, many of them become teachers in spite of the certainty that doing so will preclude them forever from the enjoyment of many of the comforts of life. But as to the many who have no standards and no ideals, the situation is really serious.

It is really a serious situation that thousands and thousands of teachers in this country have no standards and no ideals. That thousands and thousands of them are content to do what they are told and ask no questions. That they are content to go thru the prescribed motions, even for the little pay, a few bare years, and then leave the calling forever. That they are, in short, not professional teachers. That they are, alas, like the quack and the shyster and the jerry. That they are teachers for the money only, little as that is.

And this is serious for reasons that you can figure out for yourself. The point is that those are the facts. When a teacher can say that he will teach in his school whatever subjects are wanted, in complete indifference to the selection of those subjects, he is a commercial teacher. When a teacher can say that he will teach whatever the "employer" wants taught, without expressing a vigorous opinion as to what he himself wants taught, he is a commercial teacher. When a teacher can say that he will discipline according to the wishes of the patrons, without regard to his own views on discipline, he is a commercial teacher. When a teacher can say that, so far as his teaching is concerned, the man who pays the piper may call the tune, he is a commercial teacher. He has not his own standards and ideals; his sole ambition is to please the one who pays, and so get some of the pay. He is not a professional. We have no name for him—yet.

Until the teachers of this country, or most of them, are in a position to tell the employer what and how the work of teaching shall be done, how the work shall be managed and who shall continue it, teaching will not be a profession.

## SEX AND SCHOOL STANDARDS

EVERY FAIRLY SANE person probably takes it for granted that for all practical

purposes the human population of civilized countries will continue for many years to be made up of men and women, as well as of children. Why sane people, under circumstances, should seek to stir up sex antagonisms, is beyond our comprehension. We thus acknowledge our limitations, or question the sanity of those who seem to believe that there must be an eternal conflict between the interests of men and the interests of women.

We acknowledge, as we deplore, the fact that man as master has in the past abused his powers, that he has imposed unjust conditions upon woman and has unduly restricted her opportunities for development. We do not know just what man or group of men was responsible for the injustices of the past, and we try to make our fellow men of today treat the women folks with more consideration for the principles of justice. We believe that women should be treated as human beings, without regard to color, race, age or previous conditions of bondage or unenlightenment. We wish to have them included in the distribution of the benefits of the Square Deal and the Golden Rule, and we extend to them both hands of fellowship.

But when, in the course of events, a vacancy occurs in an important educational office, we protest against the petitioning of the appointing powers by clubs of women, mothers, spinsters, federationists, suffragists and anti-suffragists, who are moved to ask that a certain person be appointed because, forsooth, the favored candidate is a woman! We should ask that the appointers consider the merits and the qualifications of the candidates first of all, and then appoint the one best suited, man or woman, as the needs in the case may require, and not as the sentimentalists or the politicians may request.

If it is insolent for teachers to recommend to the mayor the names of men and women as suitable for members of the Board of Education, what is it for heterogeneous groups of citizens, who have nothing in common but their sex, to recommend to the Board of Education the appointment of a supervisor on the ground that the candidate is of the same sex as themselves?



## BOOK NOTES

All books may be ordered from  
THE AMERICAN TEACHER

WITH THE PREJUDICE for democracy derived from many years of association with things American, one turns to Chamberlain's *Ideals and Democracy* (Rand McNally & Co., 75 cents) with a distinct feeling of gratitude that there is still some of the native stock on the soil interested in the ideals of human justice, liberty and opportunity. The book is made up of nine essays, some of which were first used as addresses before educational and other gatherings.

Mr. Chamberlain has kept in touch with the development of education, and recognizes that changing times call for changing schools. He recognizes also the danger of tying up to a fad, but is not afraid of an idea because it is new. In reading this book one is not so much impressed with the opinions of the author on current educational problems, as with the fine sentiment of humanism that pervades his outlook.

THE RELATION OF education—especially higher education—to democracy is a central thot in a series of addresses by President James H. Baker, of the University of Colorado. (*Educational Aims and Civic Needs*, Longmans, 90 cents net.) While Dr. Baker's view is developed out of the older philosophies and cultural ideals, he is alive to the newer problems that society has to face, and to the evolving resources in science and democracy for the solution of these problems. To train students into the attitude that looks upon labor as service, to make conscious in him the solidarity of society, to make dominant in his conduct his loyalty to ideals, are high aims. No teacher can repudiate these and justify his place in the profession. To stand on the past and look to the future seem to be the guiding principles of this philosopher and friend of the college student. These essays are especially opportune at this time, when we hear so much of the place of the scholar in public life, the relation of the school to the affairs of the city and the state, and so on.

IT IS A WELL known fact that the reading of descriptions of symptoms of diseases will

bring about in many people a state of mind predisposed to recognizing the symptoms either in the self or in those about them. It is one of the merits of Barbara Spofford Morgan's *The Backward Child* (Putnam, \$1.25 net) that you can get from it helpful ideas about backward children without being made to look upon every child as backward. In an introduction by Miss Elizabeth E. Farrell, Supervisor of Ungraded Classes in New York City, the importance of recognizing individual differences in the work of the school is properly emphasized. The author's main purpose is to enable the teacher to diagnose special types of backwardness, and to suggest special methods of treatment. When we realize that a child may be extremely backward in one or two functions (Miss Morgan still speaks of the "faculties") and fairly normal in others, we shall do what the new psychology demands of us—namely, deal with units that are smaller even than the individual child. We shall stop in the vain attempt to produce uniform results with uniform methods applied to diverse material. The book is full of concrete illustrations for every point made, and must be of great help to all teachers—except those who have to do with children that have been specially selected for being normal, or supernormal in every respect. Such teachers are probably very few.

FOR THE EXAMINATION of groups of children that are not sufficiently atypical to be classed as "backward" but are yet not strictly true to "type," the little manual *The Examination of School Children* by Dr. William Henry Pyle of the University of Missouri (Macmillan, 50 cents net) will be found useful. These tests are the ones described in such books as Whipple's *Mental and Physical Tests* (the first volume of a new edition of which has just been published by Warwick & York) but are presented in simple form, with suggestions for additional material, and tables of "norms." To the inexperienced teacher these will give the greatest difficulty. After you have found out that the children of your class make a record in the test on "rote memory" ranging from 26 to 53, you have no way of telling whether this is a "fair average," or high or low; you wish to know what is "right" for each age represented in the class, and whether it "should be" the same for girls

as for boys. Pyle's manual gives you tables of results obtained with these tests applied to large numbers of children and adults, but does not explain the meaning of "norm," "Av. dev." and of the curves. With a little study, however, one can get the knack of applying the tests, and can put them to great practical use.

THE TRAINING of children and the training of parents are one. For this reason "The Uplift Book of Child Culture" is addressed to the education of the parents for the sake of the children. It is difficult to see just what class of parents the book is meant to reach; but doubtless there are people who are able to read good magazine-stuff, but who are quite ignorant of everything that ordinary adults ought to know, and of a great deal besides. This book contains both kinds of matter, so it may be intended for all kinds of people. But we know a number of people who would have no use for it. Part I, on character building, is by Orison Swett Marden. Part II, on the care and culture of children, is by Dr. Jenny B. Merrill; Part III, on "bad boys and girls," by Judge Ben. B. Lindsey, has only eight pages of text. There is a part on the child's body and mind, one on the boy scouts and the camp-fire girls, and one on "the child and the nation." These three are anonymous. There is a long series of chapters on "Nature and the Child" by Alice R. Northrop, and finally some chapters on vocational guidance by Gustave Blumen-thal and E. W. Weaver. The book is well printed and has many good pictures. But it is not clear just why so many of those 69 chapters should go into the same book. (The Uplift Publishing Co., Philadelphia, \$3 net.)

IT IS REFRESHING to find a teacher frankly recognizing the existence of different social and economic classes, and addressing himself as frankly to the "socially superior and directing classes" in an appeal for patronage. In *Young Boys and Boarding-school* Horace Holden enumerates the various advantages that can possibly accrue to the young boys from the processes vaguely included under the term "education," and then he shows that all the conditions for obtaining these advantages—for boys of the superior classes—are to be found in their highest development in private boarding schools. Here there is no danger that the "inherited cultural polish" will be rubbed off by "premature association with those outside his own social position;" and here he can get the uniform discipline that his fond mother is likely to spoil by over indulgence, and the father by neglect. Whatever we may think of class schools and the

perpetuation of classes thru special school processes, we cannot fail to find this presentation of the class view interesting. Many Americans may resent the argument of the author as catering too much to the sentiment of snobbery, or as aping too much the aristocracy of England; but we ought to know the other fellow's point of view before we undertake to criticise it. (Richard G. Badger, \$1 net.)

IT IS TRULY remarkable that some of the best minds of the nineteenth century developed their powers either without the help of the school, or in spite of the school. Prominent examples of the home made minds are Herbert Spencer, John Stuart Mill, Lord Kelvin and his brother James Thomson, and Karl Witte. Altho the last named had all the benefits of schools and colleges, it was the devoted training imparted by his father that was no doubt responsible for his remarkably rapid and advanced mental development. The father's methods were written down—at the request of many friends, and especially at the solicitation of Pestalozzi—and an abridgment of the story has been translated by Professor Leo Wiener of Harvard University (*The Education of Karl Witte, or The Training of the Child*. Crowell, \$1.50 net.) and provided with an introduction by H. Addington Bruce. While the book is addressed primarily to parents, with a view to getting them interested in the child's training at an early age, there is much in it that will be of value to the teacher of all grades of children.

#### STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC.,

of THE AMERICAN TEACHER, published monthly (except July and August), at New York, N. Y., required by the Act of August 24, 1912.

Editor-in-Chief—HENRY R. LINVILLE, Jamaica High School, Jamaica, N. Y.  
Managing Editor—BENJ. C. GRUENBERG, Commercial High School, Brooklyn, N. Y.

Business Manager—J. EDWARD MAYMAN, P. S. 84, Brooklyn, N. Y.

Publisher—THE AMERICAN TEACHER, 120 Lafayette Street, New York.

Owners—BENJ. C. GRUENBERG, Commercial High School, Brooklyn, N. Y.; MARK HOFFMAN, Man. Tr. High School, Brooklyn, N. Y.; HENRY R. LINVILLE, Jamaica High School, Jamaica, N. Y.; GABRIEL R. MASON, P. S. 62, Manhattan, N. Y.; J. EDWARD MAYMAN, P. S. 84, Brooklyn, N. Y.

Known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders, holding 1 per cent. or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities—None.

J. EDWARD MAYMAN, Business Manager.  
Sworn to and subscribed before me this 25th day of March, 1914.

LOUIS M. BLOCK,

Notary Public.

(My commission expires March 30, 1915.)

### THE NEPTUNE FOR GIBLEY

The next time your "city fathers" threaten to lop off a generous chunk from the appropriation for teachers' salaries read the following to them very good naturedly:

We are spending, it is stated, nearly 30,000,000 pounds sterling of public money on education; and there is talk of spending more. Is more money needed, except for one purpose, viz., better salaries for teachers? Our usual British impulse, when anything is to be done, is to assume that money will do it, and to demand money accordingly. But thinking is more important than money. Before money is granted, let us, at any rate, take thought of where, and for what, money is needed, let us take stock of the whole situation, and make sure that the present expenditure is being wisely and economically applied, and is yielding a due educational return. Is there not still a good deal of overlapping?

The salaries of teachers of every grade are inadequate. The cost of living has risen and is still rising. The conception of what a teacher should know and should be is also rising. If the profession is to attract sufficient talent and hold the place which the friends of education desire, it must be better paid.

—LORD BRICE, in his inaugural address to the Conference of Educational Association at London University.

The Chicago Normal College is maintained by the Board of Education for the purpose of affording the teachers in the Chicago schools an opportunity of obtaining the promotional credits required for advancement in that system. This summer school is open, free of charge, to all the teachers in Chicago, whether they be instructors in public, private, or parochial schools.

### FROM GOTHAM or GOPHER RUN

ONE OF THE most discrediting things that can be said about an educational system is that it has no effective way of discovering the best ability in its own ranks.

This can be said, and said truthfully, of the New York City system.

After many years of trying to get along with an arrangement for appointing those who are personally (and politically) favored for the high offices, the system is endeavoring to meet insistent public criticism by talking of "getting the best man wherever he may be found." This is a commendable attitude, if it does not mean that the best man will be overlooked if he happens to live in our own midst.

A great deal depends on what is the standard of measurement for determining the best man, and not a little depends on the sincerity of the officials who apply the standard.

## HERBERT HALL

INSTITUTE for ATYPICAL CHILDREN

FOUNDED APRIL 1, 1900, BY

MAXIMILIAN F. E. GROSZMANN

MAINTAINED BY THE

National Association for the Study and Education of Exceptional Children

This institution is one of the activities of the N. A. S. E. C. and is intended solely for the "different" child, the difficult child, the handicapped normal child, whether boy or girl. No feeble-minded, degenerate or otherwise low cases are considered. The object of this institution is to train the

### EXCEPTIONAL CHILD

Whether overbright or somewhat backward, to be able later to compete with the average normal child. In addition to the ordinary branches the course of study includes physical training, nature study, manual and constructive work, etc. Methods and Equipment are based upon the most modern pedagogic principles. Medical care is a prominent feature of the work. HERBERT HALL is the pioneer institution in this line of education. The Association maintaining it lays emphasis upon the needs of the misunderstood normal child in contrast to the overstimulated interest in the feeble minded and abnormal. "Watchung Crest," the home of HERBERT HALL, comprises over twenty-five acres of land and is situated on Watchung Mountain, a spur of the Blue Ridge, five hundred feet above sea-level (four hundred feet above Plainfield).

For terms, catalog and information address

WALDERMAR H. GROSZMANN, Principal  
"Watchung Crest." PLAINFIELD, N. J.

## The Public

A National Journal of Fundamental Democracy, and a Weekly Narrative of History in the Making.

For alert and progressive men and women.

Weekly, One Dollar per year.

537 South Dearborn Street - Chicago